The problem of fitting Sinan’s küllye into their urban contexts cannot be tackled without some degree of incertitude. In fact, studies conducted on contemporary documents of the foundations still lack an understanding of their siting implications and, furthermore, there is nothing to prove that the urban fabric now surrounding the küllye conserve traces as old as the küllye themselves.\(^1\)

It is nevertheless a fact that the küllye mostly have irregular outlines, which can only reflect property constraints at the time of their foundation. Whether the road and plot layouts that appear in 19th- and 20th-century plans make it possible or not to explain the irregular outline of the küllye, three problems arise.

How were the sites of the küllye carved out, allowing for preexisting land plots and the imperative factors of mosque orientation? The creation of a vakif for the establishment of a küllye necessitating ownership of the land, and expropriations being excluded (even for the sultans), the founders had to negotiate the purchase of sites and make do with the configuration of those available, possible consolidations not always being sufficient to regularize the outline of the plot. Research in the cadi registers should in future clarify the problem of land purchases. It will still be necessary to understand whether in the choice of plot size and shape a site was sought whose general orientation coincided with that of the projected mosque. Since it was often difficult to obtain such a coincidence (and suppose this to have been sought), could the reason for having recourse to an enclosure have been, \textit{inter alia} (“topological” insulation of the street, presence of a cemetery, etc.), to preserve the regular geometry of the mosques? The contrast is indeed striking between the mosques of many Islamic towns (principally Cairo, but also Tripoli, Fez, and so on\(^2\)) and those Ottoman towns whose plans are in any case never deformed by property constraints. The desire to preserve geometrical regularity is all the more evident since we cannot put it down solely to the necessity of adapting the plans to the geometrical schemes induced by domed roofs. This same consideration of geometry is in fact found again in the floor plans of Ottoman houses\(^3\) where regular geometry does not stem from an imperative of construction. Reflection must be given to the origins and role of enclosures surrounding küllye, the oldest proven example be-

ing the outer wall of the Beyazit Yıldırım küllye at Bursa, on which work started in 1391.\(^4\)

Was Sinan subjected to constraints (frequent variance between mosque orientation and alignment of the outer wall), or did he use them to advantage to enrich his compositions? It is in fact possible to verify that in Sinan’s küllye (Zal Mahmud Pasha or Sensi Pasha, in particular), or later in the Nuruosmaniye, such contradictions were sublimated.

Within the limits already expressed of the representativity of recent contexts, one way of clarifying these problems is to analyze other plans of küllye placed in an urban context, i.e., situated in the only precise town plans of old Istanbul, namely the plan of 1882\(^5\) and the “insurance land registry plans” of J. Pervititch.\(^6\)

We will look at the chief küllye of Istanbul designed by Sinan according to the increasing degree of complexity of their composition, as related to their architectural articulations and their different urban sittings.

\textit{Sehzade Mehmed (1543)\(^7\) }

In the Sehzade küllye, only the mosque is really integrated in the enclosure and the irregularity of the alignment thereof has no influence on the plan of the different buildings since they are aligned behind it (madrasa, tabhane, han or caravansary) or even situated on the other side of a street (Dede Efendi Imaret Caddesi) which skirts this enclosure (imaret). The basic part of the irregularity is seen in the geometry of the cemetery in which the \\textit{turb}

be freely arranged.

The presence of these irregularities (due to the urban fabric) in the design of the enclosures, without which the composition suffers, is frequent in Sinan’s küllye (see for example the Kılıç Ali Pasha) and in many others.

\textit{Şüleymaniye (1150)\(^8\) }

The Şüleymaniye küllye comes into another category, inaugurated by the Mehmet Fatih küllye and repeated at Gebze (Çoban Mustapha Pasha), of strictly orthogonal composition. We will not go into the astonishing development of this sort of composition so
soon after the Ottoman conquest, but we must look at the problems posed by the insertion of such geometry in an existing urban fabric. It seems that the rare concessions of the plan to the urban situation consist in sections which cut the corners of the madrasa (Sâlis and Râbi), of the darûs-sîfa, and of the enclosure of the mosque properly so termed. In fact, the rectangle that envelops the ensemble of the composition forms an angle of approximately 45° with the one formed by the streets constituting the framework of the district (Kirazlı Mescit Sokak, Fetva Yokusu Sokak, Esapçesme Caddesi). The main axis of the külliye is shown by the orientation towards Mecca. Moreover it falls in particularly well with the contour of the promontory which serves as the foundation for the esplanade of the mosque. In relation to this esplanade, the darûs-sîfa, imaret, tabhane complex is built on a terrace, while the madrasa of Sâlis and Râbi are adapted to the slope.

Two hypotheses may be put forward to explain the topography of the district before the construction of this külliye. The Kirazlı Mescit Sokak is an astonishingly straight street exactly parallel to Uzunçarsî Caddesi, whose alignment probably follows that of a cloistered Byzantine avenue (Dominos Portico) perpendicular to the Mese (at the intersection of which a tetrapyle was said to stand). The fact that the Kirazlı Mescit Sokak was prior to Süleymaniye, may be deduced morphologically, would thus be archaeologically confirmed, and would explain the bevel of the enclosure of the darûs-sîfa. The alignment of Dökmekci Caddesi could be explained in the same way, bearing with it the bevel of the enclosure of the Râbi madrasa and the orientation of the Darûlhadîs madrasa. For the southern bevel of the mosque enclosure, due to the alignment of the Eski Saray enclosure, it is odd that a more regular solution was not found, since this was the Sultan's property and could theoretically have been arranged otherwise. This proves that bevels (for the enclosures) were not regarded as very inconvenient. Another is found to the north, opposite to Festva Yokusu Sokak, which could easily have been avoided.

The examples of the bevels of the enclosures of the darûs-sîfa, of the thebani and of the
Rābi madrasa show that the buildings proper were established in such a way that one corner touched the road skirting the available land, even though laterally recessed from the roads, and that an enclosure wall surrounded the residual space thus created. But no bevel ever affects the buildings proper.

Mihrimah (1565?)

The only significant adaptation of the Mihrimah külliye is the enclosure of the cloistered courtyard which forms a bevel and then runs parallel to the town wall. The triangular residential space between the wall the külliye is occupied by boutiques. It follows and that the whole of the composition could have been shifted to the southeast, where the land seems available, to avoid this bevel. It seems that contact with existing elements (here, the wall) was sought, with the implications of this.

Nisancı Mehmed Pasha (1587)

The same remark could be made about the portico of the courtyard of Nisanci mosque, whose outer enclosure is cut by the alignment of the Fatih Nisancı Caddesi. The space available behind the mosque could have enabled it to be moved back, hence avoiding any break in the continuity of the portico. But this functional continuity (supposing that mosque courtyard porticoes do have a specific use) was less important than the apparent internal regularity of the courtyard, which is perfectly preserved.

Rüstem Pasha

From the point of view of urban insertion, the Rüstem Pasha mosque is remarkable for its position above shops in a particularly busy commercial district. But of equal interest is the difference of orientation between the mosque and the urban context, which leads to a widening of the Uzunçarsı Caddesi. Combined with the protrusion of the ablutions fountain, this space forms a triangular opening which makes a sort of small square.
Haseki Hürrem (1538)

The irregular nature of the site where the imaret, the mekteb, the darüş-sifa and the madrasa are crowded together, was resolved somewhat naively by a residual space separating the last two buildings. The same applies to the layout of the mosque situated the other side of the Haseki Caddesi. Here the complexity stems from an awkward composition, especially if one compares it with that of the nearby tekke (Bayram Pasha, dating from the 17th century, admittedly), where the oblique line of the axis of the mosque is used to advantage to place a sebil at the intersection of two streets, in a virtuoso manner.

Semsi Ahmed Pasha, Üsküdar (1580)

The odd composition of the small Semsi Pasha külliye undoubtedly owes little to the constraints of urban context, formed initially of gardens. However, the fact that the ensemble is limited by the shore of the Bosphorus, with an orientation which a mosque should not have, entailed an offset which served as a pretext to turn the outer wall at the place where the mosque touches it. Here the architectural articulation influences the alignment of the enclosure, rather than the contrary.

Mihrimah Sultan or Iskele, Üsküdar (1547)

This composition of mosque and madrasa owes its offsetting to the slope of the enclosures. This slight offset is made visible only by the presence of a covered passage linking the two buildings, this link being underscored by the presence of two turbe which accentuate the effect of the articulation.

Atik Valide, Üsküdar (1579)

Two parts of this complex are involved in the problems posed by their urban insertion: the madrasa and the tekke. The orientation of the mosque has imposed a compositional axis for the complex (with the exception of the
tekke) which is not that of the urban context. The result is that the madrasa, aligned with the Kahyasi Caddesi, is no longer parallel to the northern portico of the mosque’s courtyard, and that its court is trapezoidal. It should however be noted that as the two wings of the portico of the madrasa are parallel to each other, there is a small courtyard (of the latrines) which assumes, through its triangular shape, the lateral effect of the offset. On the side of the street separating the mosque from the imaret, the darüş-sifa and the caravansaray, a broadening of the street is made, thus avoiding recourse to the same solution as on the other side. For the tekke, the problem is a little different: the axis of the composition chosen is that given by the general direction of the urban environment (in the circumstances, perpendicular to the Kahyasi Caddesi). The result is that, for the same reason as the nonalignment with the mosque, the courtyard is also trapezoidal, but in a symmetrical manner. Starting from the cited axis, the direction of the street separating the tekke from the mosque has been taken back symmetrically. Curiously, there is a bevel which broadens the part where this street meets the Kahyasi Caddesi, to the detriment of three cells, which are thereby deformed. In both cases, the desire to “stick” to the urban fabric is manifest. It is made all the more evident by the fact that the prayer-room of the madrasa straddles the Kahyasi Caddesi and touches the houses situated on the other side of the street. No possible lack of room can otherwise justify this original composition.

Sokollu Mehmet Pasha (1574)

The irregular nature of the site where the mosque of Sokollu stands is due to the complexity of the alignments of the streets around it. But this slight irregularity affects only the likewise slight irregularity of the alignment of the enclosure. Wedged into the southwestern corner of the site, the mosque’s geometry gives an orthogonal shape to the enclosure, which in its turn imposes this on the streets skirting it. Hence, in front of the axial entrance to the court of the mosque (the one that penetrates it by a stairway), a clearing is created, borne out by the effect
of the slanting ends of the three streets opening opposite it. The irregularity of the plot (in plan as in section) is important for the picturesque effects (slopes, counterslopes, side openings) which it creates starting from the different access.

Zal Mahmud Pasha (1580)

This külliye has a twofold peculiarity: it has two madrasa (of the mosque courtyard type) at two different levels (the land sloping down toward the Golden Horn), and its total offset in relation to the urban environment, marked by two almost parallel streets (Defterdar Caddesi below and Zal Pasha Caddesi above). The first provides the occasion for a singularly rich architectural articulation. The second has a slight influence on the geometry of the lower madrasa, in the form of a cascade of cells set back towards the interior by the slant of the Defterdar Caddesi. Sinan took advantage of the staggered effect imposed on the last cell to deftly close the portico on the side of the entrance. But, once more, as in the Sokollu mosque, he uses the irregularities of the ground to create picturesque effects: are oblique entrance countersloping through the lower courtyard toward the mosque, an enfolding view laterally to the mosque starting from the upper courtyard (especially from the gateway to the Zal Pasha Caddesi), and sloping down towards the lower madrasa.

Two additional facts emerge from this rapid analysis of the urban settings of a number of Sinan’s külliye: the constraints were accepted and sometimes even sought after; and the richest compositions are often the latest ones in the architect’s work. In the compositions of Sokollu Pasha, of Alik Valide, of Semsie Pasha and of Zal Mahmud Pasha, that is, between 1574 and 1580, even a certain virtuosity is expressed by using to advantage or even “inventing” urban constraints giving picturesque effects. While the mosques themselves are never affected by deformations, the enclosure of the külliye, the accesses to the mosque, the annexed buildings take on this seemingly “necessary” role — over and beyond the strictly functional necessities — blending composition in with the urban context.

Pierre Pinon